Augustini Hipponensis Africitas*

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In this paper, I discuss the term *africitas,* tracing it back to its origins in the work of the sixteenth-century humanist, Juan Luis Vives. Notwithstanding the modern descriptions of *africitas,* which I find somewhat racist, Vives used the term above all as a geographical designation; and in any case, he considered content to be more important than style. So I examine *africitas* in the sense of "relating to Africa," or "Africanness," giving a reading of Donatist and anti-Donatist sermons that date to fifth-century North Africa, and especially *sermo* 46 of Saint Augustine of Hippo. Here, in this specificity, we can find a useful sense for *africitas.*

Dans ce discours, on discute le terme *africitas* en le faisant remonter jusqu'à ses origines chez l'humaniste du seizième siècle, Juan Luis Vives. Malgré les descriptions modernes d'*africitas*, qui me semblent enfin un peu racistes, Vives a utilisé le terme surtout comme une désignation géographique, et en tout cas, il considérait que le fond valait plus que la forme. Alors, on examine l'*africitas* dans le sens de "se rapportant à l'Afrique," ou "africanité," en lisant les sermons Donatistes et anti-Donatistes qui datent de la cinquième siècle en Afrique du Nord, et surtout le sermon 46 de saint Augustin d'Hippon. On veut dire qu'ici, dans la spécificité, on peut retrouver un sens bien utile d'*africitas.*

I have recently embarked on a project that puts the Africanness of Augustine of Hippo at the centre of a reading of his work. My aim is not to supplant the more traditional picture of him as assimilated to the Romanness of the empire, but to supplement and complicate it. Augustine was, I argue, simultaneously a Roman and an African, affiliated to, even representing, certain aspects of empire but at the same time very much aware of himself as a man from the provinces – specifically, the provinces of Numidia and of Africa Proconsularis. His self-representation does not occupy a unitary subject position; different aspects of his background and education are emphasized under different moments of pressure. But his status as simultaneously both insider and outsider constantly inflects his thought and the way in which he engages those around him. This, I suggest, may be seen as an "eccentric" view of Augustine of Hippo: eccentric because it invites us to view the empire from off-centre,

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from North Africa; and eccentric because it disrupts the unreflective assimilation of Augustine and his writings into a narrative of the smooth sweep of Western intellectual tradition.[1]

Africitas *as style.*

"Africanness" is not, of course, a transparent category. There is, however, one area in the study of late antiquity in which it has been much discussed: in the context of the longstanding inquiry into the regional development of Latin. In view of the subsequent variations in development of the romance languages, Latin is posited to have developed differently in different parts of the empire, and the scholarly impetus becomes to document how and when. In theory Latin in Africa is a particularly interesting case, since there is no subsequent development of a local romance language to produce an *ex post facto* explanation for regional variations, or to provide the illusory illumination afforded by hindsight.

African Latin has, however, proved a problematic category. It has a name of its own: the notion of a distinctively African style of writing Latin is known as *africitas*. This in itself is an index of difference: we do not, for example, have the term *gallitas* or *iberitas.* The notion of *africitas* took hold in earnest in the later nineteenth century, thanks above all to a study of local variants of Latin with special emphasis on North Africa that was published in by Karl Sittl in 1882.[2] Not surprisingly, the rise of a notion of *africitas* was more or less contemporaneous with the beginning of the discourse about nations, nationalism, and national characteristics that took on such a sinister burden as the twentieth century wore on. *Africitas* itself has been weighed down with qualititative judgements to a degree that the other regional forms of Latin have not. The defining characteristics of *africitas* itself, as a distinctive form of Latin, are far from innocently constructed. They include a purported preference for superlatives; a taste for pleonasm, redundancy, and florid neologisms; and the precocious development of the accented, or rhythmical, cursus, as opposed to the classical quantitative one. We should pause for a moment to consider these categories: superlatives; pleonasms; neologisms; rhythmical cursus. Might these

[1] Note, for example, the essays in *Augustinus Afer*, ed. P.-Y. Fux, J.-M. Roessli, and O. Wermelinger (Fribourg, Suisse, 2003), 2 vols., collected from the conference convened in Algeria in 2001: it is tellingly subtitled *Saint Augustin: africanité et universalité,* and the contributors pay far more attention to the latter category than to the former.

[2] Karl Sittl, *Die lokalen Verschiedenheiten der lateinischen Sprache mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des afrikanischen Lateins* (Hildesheim, 1972 [1882]).

perhaps be redescribed as the distinctive exuberance of "the natives" – and their great sense of rhythm?[3]

Various versions of this thesis rumbled around throughout the twentieth century, questioning the parameters of *africitas* but never willing to reject it altogether; this despite the fact that Sittl himself published a *retractatio* only nine years later, in the form of a vast review essay which repudiated the whole operating notion of "das Vulgärlatein" as "ein Phantasiegebilde."[4] At length, in 1985, Serge Lancel published the article "Y a-t-il une *africitas*?" that carefully reviewed the *status quaestionis* and systematically dispatched each of the purported peculiarities of African Latin.[5] The redundancies, he argued, can readily be paralleled from classical writers; the neologisms can be traced, not to origins in Africa, but to the way in which Christianity more generally stretched and reinvigorated the language. Exoticisms that had been attributed to Punic are played down with the demonstration that Punic, though it was clearly a living language up through Augustine's day, was in linguistic terms kept very separate from Latin; there are barely any Punic borrowings, even in sermons. Lancel ends up attributing the "vigor" of African Latinity to the corresponding vigor of the rhetorical schools in Africa. The most important point, however, is buried in the middle of his article. He is talking about syntactic "vulgarisms" – for example, the use of the infinitive in indirect questions – and observes that "only the overwhelming preponderance of our texts [i.e. those from Africa] between the end of the second century and the fourth century makes these [vulgarisms] appear as statistically very much in the majority in Africa."[6] This is key: a large proportion of the Latin prose texts from late antiquity come from North Africa.[7] Look up an unusual word from a late Latin prose text in the Cetedoc database, and the odds are that – numerically

[3] Gertrude Stein skewers this notion of "native" in *Everybody's Autobiography*: "It is queer the use of the word, native always means people who belong somewhere else … That shows that the white race does not really think they belong anywhere because they think of everybody else as a native." Quoted in Janet Malcolm, *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice* (New Haven/London, 2007), p. 18.

[4] "Jahresbericht über Vulgär- und Spätlatein 1884–1890," *Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft* 68 (1891), 226–86; quote from the introduction, p. 226. I found this reference in M. Dorothy Brock, *Studies in Fronto and his Age* (Cambridge, 1911), p. 164, which itself provides a sober and useful rehearsal of the claims to a distinctive African Latinity on pp. 161–261 – and concludes that it is a chimaera.

[5] Serge Lancel, "Y a-t-il une *africitas*?," *Revue des études latines* 63 (1985), 161–82; this is, in effect, a sequel to Serge Lancel's "La fin et la survie de la latinité en Afrique du Nord: État des questions," *Revue des études latines* 59 (1981), 269–97.

[6] "Y a-t-il une *africitas*?," p. 173: "seule la forte prépondérance de nos textes, entre la fin du second siècle et le iv^{e} siècle fait apparaître statistiquement comme très majoritaires en Afrique."

[7] A point forcibly made, for the second and third centuries CE, by Brock, *Studies in Fronto*, p. 163: "Literature was almost exclusively in the hands of Africans."

speaking – its principal appearances will be in Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine: three out of four, North Africans.[8]

But the issue of *africitas* has still not been laid to rest, for J. N. Adams recently revisited the question in his vast study of regional diversification in Latin from 200 BCE to 600 CE.[9] He asked, again, whether *africitas* existed – and answered with a qualified "yes." In terms of the written language, he detects *africitas* on a lexical, though not a syntactic, level. There are local loan-words, especially – not surprisingly – for names of plants and of geographic features; a few lexical associations point to linguistic connections between North Africa and Sardinia – again, no surprise, in view of the well-traveled trade routes between the two regions. Yet Adams rejects the notion that Punic syntactic features might have found their way into Latin: "The African writers whose works have survived were mostly highly educated products of the rhetorical schools, writing a learned, *even bombastic*, variety of the language. They were well capable of resisting any alien syntactic patterns that they might (perhaps) have heard around them."[10] Ultimately, the evidence for *africitas* is reduced to some thirty loan-words or idiosyncratic lexical usages. In the conclusion to his *magnum opus*, Adams writes, "It is African Latin that has emerged as the best attested regional variety, and that is paradoxical, given the scepticism that it has attracted since Sittl was discredited."[11] This statement does not just point to a paradox: it implies a *non sequitur*. Given the vast amount of material from late antiquity, Latin from Africa simply is the best attested regional variety – it has the most witnesses – particularly when one includes, as Adams does, non-literary sources such as the Albertini tablets. It is therefore not surprising that it gives us the richest evidence for regional variations as well.[12]

[8] This is, of course, a shaky criterion, given that Cetedoc coverage is far from comprehensive, but the impression is not wholly misleading.

[9] J. N. Adams, *The Regional Diversification of Latin 200 BC-AD 600* (Cambridge, 2007).

[10] Adams, *Regional Diversification*, p. 575; my emphasis. Even here, there is the derogatory suggestion of excess: the "natives" are not permitted only to be learned, they are bombastic too.

[11] Adams, *Regional Diversification,* p. 710.

[12] I have given only Adams's conclusions about written language; I shall not essay here the complex question of the development of spoken Latin in North Africa, which Adams reviews as well, using repeatedly the *locus classicus* in which Augustine discloses that he was mocked at Rome for his African pronunciation, and concludes, "aliud est enim esse arte, aliud gente securum"; see Augustine, *de ordine* 2.17.45, in CCSL 29, pp. 87–137, at 131. See also the recent overview by Hubert Petersmann, "Gab es ein afrikanisches Latein? Neue Sichten eines alten Problems der lateinischen Sprachwissenschaft," in *Estudios de Lingüística Latina: Actas del IX Coloquio Internacional de Lingüística Latina*, ed. B. García-Hernández (Madrid, 1998), pp. 125–36; and, specifically for Augustine, Michel Banniard, "Variations langagières et communication dans la prédication d'Augustin," in *Augustin prédicateur (395–411): Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly (5–7 septembre 1996)*, ed. Goulven Madec (Paris, 1998),

The odd thing about *africitas* is that, from Sittl onwards, it has been repeatedly invoked only to be modified or rejected outright. (In some ways this paper is a contribution to the genre.) So, even if its latter-day reification is deeply flawed, and riven with loaded and misleading properties, it is still worth looking at the context in which the term was first used.

The term *africitas* seems to have been coined in the first half of the sixteenth century by the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives, in the third of his five books *De tradendis disciplinis*;[13] as Eduard Norden shows, Vives was responding to a contemporary preoccupation among humanists with discussing the national – or, perhaps better, local – characteristics of different forms of Latin.[14] In terms of word-formation, the term *africitas* is clearly constructed along the lines of *graecitas* or *latinitas*, which in themselves are problematic: they seem to appeal to a notional purity, a transparent essence of Greekness or Latinness. (Augustine uses the phrase *ut latine loquar* to mean "to speak plainly."[15]) With *africitas*, however, there is no linguistic substrate to which one can appeal – and hence it designates some notional quality of Africanness superimposed on another language, in this case Latin.

The same phrase of Vives is always cited to illustrate the coining of *africitas* – including at the beginning of the article by Lancel mentioned earlier. The citation runs as follows:

pp. 73–93, at 91: he concludes optimistically that "ce *sermo humillimus* est aussi près qu'il est possible de l'être dans la bouche d'un évêque lettré du *sermo quotidianus* des Africains."

[13] The five books *De tradendis disciplinis* form the eighth to twelfth books of the encyclopedic twenty-book *De disciplinis*; the first seven are entitled *De causis corruptarum artium*, while the final eight are more diverse: *De prima philosophia sive de intimo naturae opificio* (three books), *De instrumento probabilitatis*, *De explanatione cuiusque essentiae*, *De disputatione*, and *De censura veri* (two books). The work was first published in Antwerp in 1531; I read it in a version of 1636, published in Leiden by Joannes Maire, that contains only the first twelve books – i.e. *De causis* and *De tradendis*.

[14] Eduard Norden, "Das 'afrikanische' Latein," in *Die antike Kunstprosa: vom vi. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Stuttgart, 1958), pp. 588–98, argues that "it is time … finally to banish it into the darkness from which it arose"; pp. 590–91 discuss the humanists' investment in the notion. *Inter alia*, Norden quotes an even-handed comment from Erasmus (1523): "nec mirum si Gallus refert Gallicum quiddam, si Poenus Punicum, quum in Livio nonnullos offendat Patavinitas." What, we may wonder, has become of "Patavinitas"?

[15] So used in the intimate setting of his letter to the dedicatee of *De ordine*, Zenobius: "Bene inter nos convenit … omnia, quae corporeus sensus adtingit … labi, effluere et praesens nihil obtinere, id est, ut latine loquar, non esse"; see Augustine, *ep*. 2, CSEL 34.1, p. 3. There seems to be another instance of this usage in a sermon, though this shows the overlap between "to speak plainly" and "to speak in Latin": "Non aliud intellego, fratres, nisi quia mamona est aurum, id est divitiae. Latine enim iam loquamur quod intellegatis" (*s. Lambot* 4 = 359A; Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum 2, col. 768).

> *Augustinus* multum habet *Africitatis* in contextu dictionis, non perinde in verbis, praesertim in libris *de Civitate Dei*.[16]
>
> Augustine has a great deal of *africitas* in the way he puts together his prose, though not correspondingly in his vocabulary, especially in the book *The City of God.*

Vives knew the *City of God* very well – better than almost anyone, in fact, past or present, since in 1522 he dedicated to Henry VIII of England a commentary upon the *City of God* that became the touchstone for interpretation of the work, repeatedly reprinted and not superseded for centuries. His attribution of *africitas* to the prose style of the *City of God* is therefore not grounded in ignorance or frivolity; nor, we may suppose, is it intended to turn the reader away from engaging the work. But in what context is this lapidary statement delivered?

Book three of *De tradendis disciplinis* presents a program of education for children – a *cursus* – intended to cover eight or nine years, from the seventh to the fifteenth or sixteenth year of age.[17] Vives warns, early in the third book:

> Ante omnia arcendus puer ab authore, qui vitium potest fovere ac nutrire, quo is laboret: ut libidinosus ab Ovidio, scurrilis a Martiale, maledicus & subsannator a Luciano, pronus ad impietatem a Lucretio, & plerisque philosophorum, Epicureis potissimum.[18]
>
> Above all, a boy should be warned off an author who can foster and nurture a fault under which he might labour: for example, the lustful child [should be kept away] from Ovid, the vulgar jokester from Martial, the foul-mouthed abuser from Lucian, the one prone to impiety from Lucretius and indeed many of the philosophers, especially Epicureans.

The program of education is, therefore, moral as well as stylistic. It is not surprising, then, that after the description of a more or less fixed *cursus*, Vives takes care to recommend works for further independent reading. He starts by discussing what reference works to stock in one's library. After dictionaries, he adds:

> Sunt in his duabus linguis authores quidam misti, qui simul & historias & fabulas, & vocum significatus, & oratoria, & philosophica attingunt: quorum appellatio vera est, et maxime propria *philologi*.[19]
>
> In these two languages [Greek and Latin] there are some compendious (*misti*) authors, who touch simultaneously on history and myth, and the meaning of words, and rhetoric, and philosophy: of these, the apt and appropriate name is *philologi.*

[16] *De tradendis disciplinis* (Leiden, 1636), 3:537. Throughout this paper, translations are my own.

[17] For an overview of the work in the context of other humanist writings, see Valerio Del Nero, "The *De disciplinis* as a Model of a Humanistic Text," in *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Leiden/Boston, 2008), pp. 177–226.

[18] *De tradendis disciplinis*, 3:505.

[19] *De tradendis disciplinis*, 3:532.

Philologus is an important term for Vives, for it is under the sign of *philologus* that he situates himself and his learned endeavours. *Philologus* does not yet mean what we understand by "philologist";[20] neither does it carry the freighted contrast with the ethical and abstract concerns of the *philosophus* that we find in Seneca.[21] It involves, as one might infer from this excerpt, the study of words and stories in their wider context; it is not so far off the *grammaticus*, whose province was instruction in and interpretation of canonical texts. But its most important characteristic is its contraposition to theology.[22] Of the *philologi* writing in Greek, Vives's examples are Suidas and Athenaeus; of those using both languages, Aulus Gellius. Leading the list of Latin examples is the *City of God* – which should surprise one given the antithesis of philology to theology, but not given Vives's engagement with the work. (It is followed by the *Adagia* of Vives's friend Erasmus.) So when the *City of God* returns, in the passage quoted by Lancel, it has already been cited as an exceptional compendious work of reference – looking at the company it is keeping, an encyclopedia of sorts.[23]

The *africitas* passage is part of a list of possible models for the student, warning him against stylistic pitfalls. "*Apuleius* in asino plane rudit.[24] In aliis sonat hominem … *Macrobius* melior est his, atque explanatior"[25] – "Apuleius is obviously boorish in the person of an ass. In his other works, he sounds like a man … Macrobius is better than these, and clearer." The African origins of Apuleius are not noted; but Tertullian, Cyprian, and Arnobius are severally accused of sometimes speaking *ut Afer*, which is glossed in the case of Tertullian as *perturbatissime* – "in a thoroughly agitated manner." When we get to Augustine, Vives reminds his readers that he has

[20] Having said this, Vives, *De tradendis disciplinis*, 1:416 offers a definition of "philologia" that is not far off our own; but the definition is, as we shall see, belied by the practice: "Scrutatio illa & rerum, & verborum, & authorum veteris memoriae, observatio atque annotatio eorum diligens, quae grammaticae est coniuncta, *Philologia* nominatur: & qui eam praestat, *philologus*" – "That scrutiny of things, and of words, and of authors of ancient record, and their diligent investigation and annotation – which is connected with grammar – is called philology; and the person who excels at this, a philologist."

[21] See Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 108.30–35.

[22] Mark Vessey points out to me that the word is (ironically) not discussed in Silvia Rizzo, *Il lessico filologico degli umanisti* (Rome, 1973), nor is there an entry in René Hoven, *Lexique de la prose latine de la renaissance* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1994), suggesting that Hoven perceives no shift in usage in the period. Yet, if nothing else, theology has supplanted philosophy as the contrasting term – as Vessey also emphasizes. Personal communication, November 2014.

[23] Indeed, Vives clearly thinks of his own work here as in the tradition of the learned encyclopedists: Del Nero, "*De disciplinis* as a model," pp. 180–81.

[24] Not original to Vives; and Apuleius's ass may be part of what grounds the perception of a distinct and bombastic *africitas.* Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, p. 590 quotes Melanchthon (1523): "recte Apuleius, qui cum asinum repraesentaret, rudere quam loqui mallet."

[25] *De tradendis disciplinis*, 3:537.

particularly recommended the *City of God* to *philologi:* "id enim bona ex parte in media *philologia* versatur"[26] – "because that work, for a good part of it, is immersed in *philologia*." At the very end of the list, Lactantius, yet another writer of African origin, is accorded the highest praise of anyone: "Christianorum omnium facundissimus est *Lactantius*: sonum habet plane *Ciceronianum*, praeterquam in paucis: imitandus caetera"[27] – "The most eloquent of all the Christians is Lactantius: he has a really Ciceronian sound, except in a few passages: in all other respects he should be imitated."

In the final book of *De tradendis disciplinis*, Vives's ethical concerns come to the fore. Training in style is important, but it is secondary:

> Augustinus recte, qui eo magis ac soloecismis ac barbarismis offendi homines, quo infirmiores sunt: & eo esse infirmiores, quo doctiores videri velint, non rerum scientia, quae aedificat, sed signorum, qua non inflari difficile est, quum & ipsa rerum scientia saepe cervicem erigat, nisi Dominico reprimatur iugo.[28]
>
> Augustine rightly [said that] the weaker people are, the more they are offended by solecisms and barbarisms; and the more they wish to seem learned, the weaker they are – learned through the knowledge not of real things (*res*), which is uplifting, but of signs (*signa*), by knowledge of which it is hard not to be puffed up; since even the knowledge of things often makes one arrogant, unless restrained by the yoke of the Lord.

Here, direct from Augustine, is the contrast between *res* and *signa* that is most memorably elaborated in his guide to preaching and biblical exegesis, *De doctrina christiana*.[29] The sentiment, however, is rather one expressed in *De catechizandis rudibus*, which anticipates the "substance over style" argument here: those of secular education "malle debeant veriores quam disertiores audire sermones, sicut malle debent prudentiores quam formosiores habere amicos"[30] – "ought to prefer hearing sermons that are more true than clever, just as they ought to prefer having friends who are more thoughtful than attractive." On this conclusion (which Vives reiterates, again naming Augustine as its origin, on the penultimate page of *De tradendis disciplinis*), *africitas* is of little concern if the *res* being expressed will serve for edification.

[26] *De tradendis disciplinis*, 3:537.

[27] *De tradendis disciplinis*, 3:537.

[28] *De tradendis disciplinis*, 5:685.

[29] This notwithstanding Vives's emphasis earlier in *De disciplinis* on the need to harmonize *res* and *verba*: see Del Nero, "*De disciplinis* as a model," p. 186.

[30] Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 9.13, in CCSL 46, pp. 121–78, at 135; the whole section develops this theme, including the observation that the learned should not laugh at priests who invoke God "cum barbarismis et soloecismis."

So *africitas* is, according to the man who coined the term, an aspecific set of characteristics; by no means may it be applied to all writers from North Africa, or to (almost) any of them all of the time; and it does not seem to be laden with the crypto-racist properties that have subsequently accrued to it. This invites us to turn aside and consider how Augustine's own Africanness might be on display, not in the style of what he writes or says, but in its content.

Africitas *as substance.*

Certainly, Augustine is aware of his Africanness. There is a famous letter exchange that dates to around 390, relatively soon after Augustine had abandoned Milan and his secular ambitions and returned to North Africa. Maximus of Madauros – a *grammaticus* from a town not far from Augustine's birthplace Thagaste – had written to him, sneering at the Punic names of African martyrs and objecting to the ways their tombs were clogging up the towns. Augustine responds:

> miror, quod nominum absurditate commoto in mentem non venerit habere vos et in sacerdotibus Eucaddires et in numinibus Abaddires. non puto ego ista tibi, cum scriberes, in animo non fuisse, sed more humanitatis et leporis tui commonefacere nos voluisti ad relaxandum animum, quanta in vestra superstitione ridenda sint. neque enim usque adeo te ipsum oblivisci potuisses, *ut homo Afer scribens Afris*, cum simus utrique in Africa constituti, Punica nomina exagitanda existimares.[31]
>
> I'm amazed that, once you'd raised the subject of absurd names, it didn't occur to you that *you* have Eucaddires among your priests and Abaddires among your divinities. I don't think that those weren't in your mind while you were writing, but in your charming, urbane way, you wanted to impress upon us – in order to put us at ease – what risible things there are in your superstition. You couldn't have forgotten yourself to such a degree that, *as an African writing to Africans*, and even though we are both here in Africa, you should think that Punic names are shocking.

We may reject the term *africitas*; but Africanness remains pertinent to Augustine. He is one *homo Afer* amid others. And his life's work lies above all in preaching the word of God to Africans. So – laying aside notions of exuberance or pleonasm – when Augustine is preaching to Africans in Africa, how does he go about it? How does he engage his African congregations? What circumstances shape his message? This is not a question about colloquialisms, or verbal borrowings, or concern with Punic, though all these could be comprehended within it. It is a broader question about how Augustine negotiates the boundaries of the different cultures of which he is a part – African, Roman, Christian – and about the pressures under which his discursive

[31] Augustine, *ep*. 17.2, in CSEL 34.1, p. 41.

strategies are forged; in Homi Bhabha's terms, it is about how Augustine performs the terms of his cultural engagement.[32]

My quest is for specificity; the question cannot be addressed otherwise without collapsing into bland approximations. In the remainder of this essay, I shall suggest that the way in which Augustine uses scripture in his sermons owes a great deal to the pressure from that uniquely African schismatic sect, the Donatists.[33] To contravene their biblical claims, he is forced to produce convincing readings of biblical passages, and to link them cogently with others.[34] I shall suggest further that this is another place where Augustine's complicated relationship to his simultaneously African and Roman selves is hiding in plain sight.

The complication is accentuated by the relative lack of distinction between Augustine's church and that of the Donatists in North Africa.[35] There is essentially no doctrinal difference between them. Both are trinitarian churches; both read the same bible; both would subscribe to the Nicene creed. Both believe in the sacraments of baptism and ordination, though the Donatists are sticklers about the sacral lineage of the person doing the baptising or ordaining – and this is the foundation of their difference. In her recent study of rural preaching in late antique North Africa, Leslie Dossey warns: "The contrast between Donatists and Catholics should not … be exaggerated. Donatists and Catholics traded sermons, clerics, and congregations back and forth."[36] The situation was aggravated by the fact that a given see, or even a parish, would contain both Catholic and Donatist clergy, in direct competition for the local congregation.

[32] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London/New York, 1994), p. 3: "Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced *performatively*" (my emphasis). Bhabha's work has proved interestingly provocative in helping me to think about the competing claims of Augustine's identities and affiliations; I shall develop elsewhere the issues raised by this contraposition.

[33] The starting point for the study of Donatism remains the work of W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: a movement of protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1952) who sees the group as (*inter alia*) a sort of resistance movement of the North African underclass. The extraordinary energy generated by the competition between Catholics and Donatists, and its consequences in the construction of churches and the proliferation of episcopal sees, is beautifully illuminated by Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: wealth, the fall of Rome, and the making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), esp. pp. 326–31 and 334–36.

[34] Maureen A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: the Donatist World* (Minneapolis, 1997) provides a useful introduction to Donatists' readings of the bible, and a theological counterpoint to Frend's *Donatist Church*.

[35] This point is well made, for many different moments and confrontations, in Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011); their similarity is also stressed by Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2010), esp. pp. 147–94.

[36] Dossey, *Peasant and Empire*, p. 186.

The nomenclature of "Catholics" and "Donatists" may seem to designate distinct groups, one orthodox, one heretical. But – not unusually – the nomenclature is imposed by the winning side. Augustine, in particular, emphasizes the Catholic, universal nature of the Christian communion to which he belongs, and dubs the opposing side with the name of their ostensible founder, a man from Numidia, possibly a bishop, who lived in the early fourth century, or with that of one of his successors, Parmenianus.[37] (The term "Parmenianists", though found in Augustine's letters, has not caught on in modern scholarship.) Donatists, not surprisingly, refer to themselves simply as "Christians." There is a particularly interesting example of this in the fifth-century genealogical guide to the interpretation of biblical names, the *Liber genealogus*. The earlier two recensions, prepared for the use of Donatists (who are styled the children of Abel, while the Catholics are the children of Cain), refer to the persecution of "the Christians"; the third, which has clearly been appropriated for Catholic Christian use, substitutes the term "Donatists."[38]

Beyond this slippery issue of nomenclature, there are only two ways to distinguish "Catholics" from "Donatists." One is – as we see particularly in Augustine's letters – the interminable rehearsal of their respective histories, and especially the accusation (by Donatists of Catholics), or dismissal (by Catholics), of the charge of *traditio* – the handing over of the writings of the church under pressure of persecution. (*Traditores* is one of the most consistent terms of abuse for the Catholic Christians.) Along with this goes a deep suspicion, on the part of the Donatists, of secular authorities and judgements. The other distinction between the two sects lies, as we have just seen in the instance of Cain and Abel, in the opponents' respective interpretation of individual passages of scripture.

I shall pursue the claim that Donatist pressure led Augustine to be ever more precise about scripture with evidence from a recently-published dossier of twenty-two previously unedited Donatist sermons. These sermons come from an African collection of the early fifth century, and were transmitted under the name of "Chrysostomus Latinus"; they are found in a late witness (1435) of a previously

[37] Frend, *Donatist Church*, devotes a chapter to Parmenianus (pp. 193–207); Parmenianus also has a long entry in the *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire*, vol. 1.

[38] *Liber genealogus*, ed. Theodor Mommsen (1892), in MGH AA 9, *Chronica minora saec. IV-VII*, pp. 154–96; children of Cain at 20[b], children of Abel at 39[a], Christians and Donatists at 627: "ipso consulatu venit persecutio christianis" [later "Donatistis"]. The three recensions date respectively to 427, 438, and 455–463. An excellent discussion, situating the work in a wider Donatist context of textual transmission, may be found in Richard Rouse and Charles McNelis, "North African literary activity: a Cyprian fragment, the stichometric lists and a Donatist compendium," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 30 (2000), 189–238.

known sermon collection, the *Collectio Escurialensis*.[39] The identification of the sermons as Donatist is, of course, a difficult one, given that Donatists refer to themselves as "christiani"; indeed, these sermons almost all use the term "christiane" or "homo christiane" when addressing the congregation directly.[40] However, one sermon in the group – sermon 39, formerly numbered as Escorial 18 – is explicitly, indeed vitriolically, directed against the *traditores*, and this has been used to argue that the sermons as a whole are Donatist.[41]

As for Augustine, the range of possible sermons to consider is huge. I have selected one that explicitly treats of both Africa and the Donatist presence there, and above all, Donatist readings of scripture: *sermo* 46.[42] Moreover, its length – more than 1100 lines, about two hours' worth of preaching – suggests that it has come down to us unabridged.[43] We do not, unfortunately, know where it was preached, though a style at once chatty and simple, and an apparent knowledge of the movements of some of his congregation, would seem to make Hippo the most likely location. (Augustine tended to reserve his most rhetorically ambitious sermons for his regular trips to preach at Carthage.) Lambot, who edited the sermon for Corpus Christianorum, suggests that it was preached after 17 June 414, when a law preventing the Donatists from bearing witness was passed – this because it seems to form a pair with the

[39] The witness is Vindobonensis Palatinus 4147 (Rec. 499); the discovery is announced by François Leroy, "Vingt-deux homélies africaines nouvelles attribuables à l'un des anonymes du Chrysostome latin (PLS 4)," *Revue Bénédictine* 104 (1994), 123–47.

[40] Contrast Augustine, who tends to use "fratres" or (especially under duress – e.g. in *s. Dolb*. 2, pp. 328–344, *passim*) "carissimi."

[41] François Leroy re-edited this sermon, with an argument for its Donatism and that of the collection as a whole, in "L'homélie donatiste ignorée du corpus Escorial (Chrysostomus Latinus, *PLS* IV, sermon 18)," *Revue Bénédictine* 107 (1997), 250–62; it can also be read in Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum 4, cols. 707–10. The twenty-two newly discovered sermons are edited by F. Leroy, "Les 22 inédits de la catéchèse donatiste de Vienne: une édition provisoire," *Recherches augustiniennes* 31 (1999), 149–234. Leroy, "Vingt-deux homélies," p. 140 perhaps forces the notion of the unity of these sermons in proposing that their author is a single Donatist bishop: "cet ensemble de soixante textes se révèle homogène et seule la critique interne sera peut-être amenée à en dissocier l'un ou l'autre élément." Be that as it may, I treat them here as a Donatist collection, and leave aside the question of single authorship.

[42] Published in CCSL 41, pp. 527–70.

[43] In the course of editing the recently-discovered collection by Augustine, now known simply as the Dolbeau sermons, François Dolbeau comments on his realization that many of the sermons of Augustine that we have are "incomplets, mutilés, tronqués, remaniés"; he notes that the four indicators that a sermon may be complete are its transmission history, its length, its rhetorical structure, and allusions to current affairs. The particulars of *sermo* 46 satisfy all these desiderata. Preliminary comments on *s. Dolbeau* 4 (= Mayence 9), in *Augustin d'Hippone: Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique* (Paris, 1996), pp. 521–23.

following sermon, which alludes to that law. Despite the show trial of the Donatists at the Council of Carthage in 411, which Catholics would mark as the end of the schism, Donatism was far from dead: indeed, Rouse and McNelis, following Inglebert, suggest that the Donatists may have regarded the Council as merely another, more severe stage of persecution.[44]

I wonder whether *sermo* 46 might have been preached on New Year's Day: the subject is shepherds, which would be seasonal, though given that the metaphor of bishop as shepherd was already active, this is hardly conclusive; more pressing is the parallel with *s. Dolbeau* 26, an exceptionally long sermon which was indisputably preached on New Year's Day, which is explicitly "contra paganos," and which seems – as this one does – to be composed in a somewhat competitive spirit, to keep people away from the celebrations in the streets.

Augustine is preaching, not simply "de pastoribus," but on a complicated passage of Ezechiel 34 that begins, "Et factum est verbum domini ad me, dicens: Fili hominis, propheta super pastores Israel et dic ad pastores Israel" – "And the lord spoke to me, saying: son of man, prophesy about the shepherds of Israel and speak to the shepherds of Israel." The sermon quickly turns to good and bad shepherds and their flocks, and thence explicitly to the Donatists. In a succinct rehearsal of the history of grievances between the two sides, Augustine addresses "aliquis haereticus, etsi non frater diaboli, certe adiutor et filius" – "some heretic or other, even if not the devil's brother, certainly his helper and son":

> O capte, aliquando certe tu eras qui primis temporibus seditionis tuae *traditores* arguebas, innocentes damnabas, iudicium imperatoris quaerebas, iudicio episcoporum non consentiebas, victus totiens appellabas, apud ipsum imperatorem studiosissime litigabas. [45]
>
> O prisoner, it was certainly you who in the first days of your sedition accused the *traditores*, condemned the innocent, sought a ruling from the emperor, did not accede to the judgement of the bishops, were repeatedly conquered and then appealed, energetically sought legal recourse with that same emperor.

To this, we may compare *s. Leroy* 39,[46] the vitriolic sermon which lends the Donatist collection its attribution, which is preached on the text "Cave a pseudo-prophetis" –

[44] Rouse and McNelis, "North African literary activity," p. 221. Note too that the Donatist recensions of the *Liber genealogus* post-date the Council of Carthage.

[45] Augustine, *sermo* 46.29.

[46] As far as I know there is as yet no convention for citing these new sermons. Since the manuscript from Vienna significantly expands the *Collectio Escuraliensis*, as well as presenting some of the previously known sermons in a different order, I propose that they should be cited analogously to the Dolbeau sermons: with the name of Leroy, and the numeration found in the new manuscript. (I add line numbers to citations, to make passages easier to find.) Leroy, "Vingt-deux homélies," pp. 129–37

"beware of false prophets." In the context of being wary, the preacher warns against those "qui aliud docent quam faciunt, aliud agunt quam dicunt, aliud exhibent quam vocantur" – "who teach what they do not do, do what they do not preach, display something other than what they are called." Wolves, he continues, are the worst of creatures; "et tamen lupi, vigilante pastore, ovibus nocere non possunt; *traditores* vero nec ovibus nec pastoribus parcunt; … Christianos quod se esse simulant malitiose infestant" – "and yet, so long as the shepherd is watchful, wolves cannot harm the sheep; truly, *traditores* spare neither sheep nor shepherds; … they attack insidiously because they pretend that they are Christians." In *sermo* 46, Augustine has an answer for this, presented, as so often, as if in dialogue with a fictitious and combative interlocutor: "'Sed illi codices tradiderunt, et illi thus idolis posuerunt, ille et ille.' Quid ad me de illo et illo? Si fecerunt, non sunt pastores"[47] – "'But they handed over the books, and they placed incense for idols, he did this, he that.' What do I care about this and that? If they did it, they are not shepherds." We have already seen, however, that he is just as prone as our Donatist preacher to rehearse the history of the schism.

The opposition here is straightforward: one story contradicts another. But what goes on with the citation of scripture, the second mark of differentiation between Catholics and Donatists, is more complicated. After the passage just cited, Augustine says, "auferantur chartae humanae, sonent voces divinae" – "but let human records be taken out of consideration, let divine voices ring out." He continues:

> ede mihi unam scripturae *vocem* pro parte Donati; audi innumerabiles, per orbem terrarum. Quis eas enumerat? Quis eas terminat? … Prope omnis pagina nihil aliud sonat quam Christum, et ecclesiam toto orbe diffusam. Exeat mihi una *vox* pro parte Donati: quid magnum est quod quaero? [48]
>
> Produce for me one word (*vocem*) of scripture on behalf of the Donatist faction: listen to the countless ones through the world. Who counts them? Who brings an end to them? … Almost every page resounds with nothing other than Christ, and the church spread throughout the world. Let just one word (*vox*) come forth to me on behalf of the Donatists: am I asking something so difficult?

This may seem a simple demand for counter-citation. But *vox* is here a quasi-technical term: *vox* is the term with which a scriptural reference is introduced in Donatist

prints a complete repertorium of the Vienna sermons, and where the previously published ones can be found.

[47] Augustine, *sermo* 46.33.

[48] Augustine, *sermo* 46.33.

texts.[49] Augustine does not usually use it in this sense.[50] One of the first collections of biblical exempla assembled for preaching is a Donatist one from North Africa;[51] the individual passages are referred to as *voces.* So in the anti-Catholic sermon already adduced, the preacher says, "Domini *vox* est, Cavete a pseudo-prophetis";[52] elsewhere, we read, "Iohannis apostoli *vox* est: Qui fratrem suum odit, homicida est"[53] – "The *vox* of John the apostle is: He who hates his brother is a murderer." This may add special point to Augustine's regular theme on the feast days of John the Baptist, when he preaches on the *vox clamantis* and the superseding of John's transient *vox* by Christ's eternal *verbum*.[54] The Donatists, in that case, are (according to Augustine) misusing the term *vox* when they apply it to authoritative passages of scripture.

Be that as it may, our Donatist sermon collection offers some evidence that the preacher was working from his own list of *voces.* In *s. Leroy* 31, he adduces a pair of examples – Lot at Sodom and Jonah at Nineveh – in a manner both self-conscious and under-justified: "Duo de multis exempla adtulimus tam necessaria quam diversa, tam utilia quam disparia"[55] – "We have adduced two examples from many: they are as pertinent as they are different from each other, as useful as they are disparate." Similarly, in *s. Leroy* 11, the preacher explicitly signals a change of gear – and, perhaps, a shift to another volume of the handbook – in the middle of his sermon: "Dictum est de decalogo, dicendum nobis est de evangelio"[56] – "we've spoken about the decalogue, now we need to speak about the gospel." The signalling is repeated at the end of the sermon: "Tu in veteribus instrueris, tu in novis armaris; tibi praeterita exempla proficiunt, tibi Christi merita procurantur"[57] – "You are instructed in the old,

[49] Noted in P.-M. Bogaert, "Les particularités éditoriales des Bibles comme exégèse implicite ou propose: Les sommaires ou capitula donatistes," in *Lectures bibliques: Colloque du 11 novembre 1980*, ed. P.-M. Bogaert (Bruxelles, 1980), pp. 7–21.

[50] This is a preliminary impression, albeit a strong one, not yet systematically tested or quantified.

[51] Dossey, *Peasant and Empire*, p. 165; Rouse and McNelis, "North African literary activity."

[52] *s. Leroy* 39, line 18, in "L'homélie donatiste," p. 258.

[53] *s. Leroy* 55, line 1; see also *s. Leroy* 53, lines 36–37: "Obiurgantis domini vox est: Si in alieno mammona fideles non fuistis, quod vestrum est quis dabit vobis?"

[54] The theme is developed, for example, in *ss.* 288 and 293 (PL 38, cols. 1302–8 and 1327–35 respectively), and *s. Dolb.* 3, pp. 384–95.

[55] *s. Leroy* 31, lines 84–85. *s. Leroy* 39, lines 63–72, in "L'homélie donatiste," rattles off a list of examples of the virtuous left alone amid vice, which begins with Lot: "licuit Sodomis inter inquinatos et turpes, Lot sanctissimum commorari; christianos vero cum traditoribus morari non licuit" and ends with Daniel but does not, this time, include Jonah; again, the list style suggests the use of a handbook such as the *Liber genealogus* or the *Liber generationis*, another reference work discussed by Rouse and McNelis in "North African literary activity."

[56] *s. Leroy* 11, line 65.

[57] *s. Leroy* 11, lines 98–99.

you are fortified in the new; you profit from bygone examples, the merits of Christ are secured for you."

From this taxonomic pressure, I suggest, emerges a phenomenon that the Dolbeau sermons have revealed to us: Augustine's concern that his congregation study scripture *for themselves* to see the truth of it. "Codices nostri publice venales feruntur … Eme tu codicem et lege, nos non erubescimus"[58] – "Our books (*codices*) are on public sale … You, buy the book and read it, we are not ashamed." Again, in another of the Dolbeau sermons: "cottidie codices dominici venales sunt, legit lector; eme tibi et tu lege quando vacet, immo age ut vacet: melius enim ad hoc vacat quam ad nugas"[59] – "every day the Lord's books are for sale, and the reader reads them; buy them for yourself, and read them when there is time, or rather, make the time: it is better to spend time on this than on frivolity." This is a vexed sermon preached to a restless and defiant congregation in *aspera tempora*: are these times those of Donatist infringement? Are Donatists among the congregation at this moment?[60] The exhortation above moves on into a plea, "Audi, audi apostolicam vocem, multo liberiorem quam mea est" – "Hear, hear the apostolic voice, much bolder than mine is." *Vox* is the crucial term for the scriptural evidence in this combative context.

We see here how precious is the evidence from the Dolbeau sermons, for not excising the occasional and the personal – unlike so many of the sermons printed by Migne in the Patrologia Latina. In some cases, the Dolbeau sermon expands a sermon already known from Migne or elsewhere, and one instance is particularly beguiling in this context of exhorting the congregation to attend closely to the evidence of the manuscripts. Incidentally, the sermon is yet again aggressively and explicitly anti-Donatist, and it is again on the topic of wolves and shepherds. The previously known version read: "Ego enim iam immolor: immolari ad sacrificium pertinet"[61] – "For I am now being offered up: being offered up pertains to sacrifice." The Dolbeau discovery expands this to "Ego enim iam immolor vel libor – aliqui codices *libor* habent, aliqui *immolor*: libari et immolari ad sacrificium pertinet"[62] – "I am now being offered up – or serving as a libation: some manuscripts have 'libation,' some have 'offering'; both libation and offering pertain to sacrifice." Clearly, subsequent redactors of the sermon felt that the reflection on variant readings was useless, probably even deleterious. But

[58] *s. Dolb*. 26.20, pp. 381–82.

[59] *s. Dolb*. 5.14, p. 447.

[60] These suggestions gain some weight from an anti-Donatist sermon preserved in *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Ps.* 21, *en*. 2.30, in CCSL 38, pp. 121–34, at 131; the emphasis is again on direct appeal to scripture: "Ecce codex ipse, contra illum certent" – "Look, here is the codex: let them fight against that."

[61] *s.* 299A/*s. Mai* 19. Ed. G. Morin, Miscellanea Agostiniana I (Rome 1930), pp. 307–10, at 309.

[62] *s. Dolb*. 4.4, p. 515.

Augustine goes on to insist that all the promises of God are contained "in quodam chirographo, in sancta scriptura" – "in a certain manuscript, in holy scripture."

If I am correct that pressure from the Donatists led Augustine to be particularly attentive and precise in the biblical readings that he offered to his congregations, *sermo* 46 may be the evidentiary *pièce de résistance*, because it is here that Augustine explicitly essays interpretation of biblical passages that have been identified by the Donatists as referring to Africa, and the place of the church in Africa. (The *Liber genealogus*, which manages to trace the descendants of Noah to Tyre, and thence to Carthage, is a strenuous example of this phenomenon.[63]) There is a lengthy rebuttal, for example, of the notion that the word *meridies* in the Song of Songs (Cant. 1:6) refers to Africa; clearly, this claim was a *locus classicus* of Donatist biblical interpretation.[64] Then Augustine continues:

> Sed dic aliud quod te dicebas esse dicturum. "Propheta" inquit "ait: *Deus ab Africo veniet*, et iam ubi Africus, utique Africa". O testimonium! Deus ab Africo veniet, et ab Africa veniet deus! Alterum Christum in Africa nasci et ire per mundum haeretici annuntiant! Rogo quid est: Deus ab Africa veniet? Si diceretis: Deus in Africa remansit, utique turpiter diceretis. Nunc autem etiam: Veniet ab Africa, dicitis. Novimus ubi sit natus Christus, ubi sit passus, ubi in caelum ascenderit, ubi discipulos miserit, ubi eos sancto spiritu impleverit, ubi per totum mundum evangelizare iusserit, et obtemperaverunt, et impletur orbis terrarum evangelio. Et tu dicis: Deus ab Africa veniet!
>
> 39. "Ergo tu mihi" inquit "expone quid est: *Deus ab Africo veniet*." Dic totum, et fortassis intelleges. *Deus ab Africo veniet, et sanctus de monte umbroso*. Tu mihi expone, si iam ab Africa, quomodo de monte umbroso? De Numidia nata est pars Donati. Ipsi missi sunt primo in dissensionem et tumultum et scandalum, quaerentes ingenium vulneri. Numidae miserunt. Secundus Tigisitanus misit. Ubi sit Tigisi, notum est. … In Numidia, unde ventum est huc cum tanto malo, muscarium vix invenitur, in cupsonibus habitant. Quomodo mons umbrosus in Numidia? Dic mihi ergo. Noli huc usque recitare: *Deus ab Africo*, exigo sequentia: *Et sanctus de monte umbroso*. Sed ostende mihi partem Donati a Numidia de monte umbroso venire. Invenis nuda omnia, pingues quidem campos, sed frumentarios, non olivetis fertiles, non ceteris nemoribus amoenos.[65]

> But tell me another thing that you said you were going to say. "The prophet," he says, "says: *God will come from Africus*, and hey – where there is an Africus, there is certainly Africa."[66] What a testimonial! God will come from Africus, and from Africa God will

[63] *Liber genealogus*, 196[a] (with support from Virgil); 196[b] *simpliciter*.

[64] Discussed by Tilley with other examples, *Bible in Christian North Africa*, pp. 148–49; she does not cite *sermo* 46.

[65] Augustine, *sermo* 46.38–39.

[66] "Africus" most obviously means "the south," but it can also mean "African" – and the phrase "ubi Africus, utique Africa" could mean "where there is an African, that's Africa." The current Vulgate

> come! The heretics proclaim that a second Christ was born in Africa and went out into the world! Please, what does it mean: God will come from Africa? If you were to say, God spent time in Africa, you'd be saying something outrageous. But as it is, you say: He will come from Africa. We know where Christ was born, where he suffered, where he ascended into heaven, where he sent his disciples, where he filled them with the holy spirit, where he ordered them to spread the gospel through the whole world, and they obeyed, and the earth is filled with the gospel. And you say: God will come from Africa!
>
> 39. "So you explain to me," he says, "what *God will come from Africus* means." Cite the whole thing, and perhaps you will understand. *God will come from Africus, and the holy one from the shady mountain.* You explain to me, if he's coming from Africa, how is that from a shady mountain? The Donatist faction was born in Numidia. They were sent first into discord and uproar and scandal, seeking the talent to wound.[67] The Numidians sent them. Secundus[68] from Tigisi sent them. We know where Tigisi is. … The origin of this whole evil was a Numidian heretic. In Numidia, from where this whole thing came here with enormous evil, you can scarcely find a *muscarium*, they live in *cupsones*.[69] How is there a shady mountain in Numidia? So tell me. Don't just recite up to this point: *God from Africus*, I demand what follows: *and the holy one from the shady mountain.* Just show me that the Donatist faction from Numidia comes from a shady mountain. You find everything bare: certainly, the plains are fertile, but they are rich with corn, not olive trees, and they are not made pleasant with other woodland groves.

Augustine goes on to explain the contested phrase by connecting Luke (24:46), in which Christ's preaching is said to start from Jerusalem, with Joshua (15:8), on the dispersal of the sons of Israel, in which Jebus is said to be "ab Africo, quae [*sic*] est Hierusalem" – "from the south, which is Jerusalem." Then if *Africus* is Jerusalem, he says, the *mons umbrosus* must be the Mount of Olives.

The detailed knowledge of the bible that is necessary for this exegetical strategy – linking Luke to Joshua – is extraordinary, and we have tended to take it for granted. But we should also note the initial challenge. "Deus ab Africo veniet" comes from Habakkuk (3:3) whose canonicity, as far as I know, was never questioned, but which is nonetheless hardly the most familiar book of the bible, then or now. It suggests that the Donatists have been combing through the bible to find justification for their African provenance – and that Augustine, in turn, is forced to do his own combing to

removes the ambiguity by rendering this *ab austro* instead of *ab Africo*; I leave "Africus" untranslated here to keep the ambiguity in play.

[67] The Latin phrase is "quaerentes ingenium vulneri"; it makes little sense, and the manuscripts display a number of sometimes meaningless variants for "ingenium." I wonder whether Augustine might have said, "quaerentes inguinem vulneri," essentially "seeking a soft spot for a wound"?

[68] Secundus 1 in *PCBE*, bishop of Tigisi in the early fourth century.

[69] I discuss these terms below.

contravene it. Indeed, one of the Leroy sermons (*s. Leroy* 35[70]) is preached on the immediately preceding verse of Habakkuk: "Domine, audivi auditum tuum et timui, consideravi opera tua et expavi" – "Lord, I have heard your utterance and been afraid, I have pondered your works and trembled." Leading the list of God's works to ponder is an enumeration of rural topographies: "camporum prata, silvarum nemora, amoena collium, montium arbusta" [71] – "the meadows of the plains, groves of the woods, pleasant places of the hills, shrubs of the mountains." The similarities to the *locus amoenus* against which Augustine counterposes Numidia must be coincidental, but it shows with what similar lexical range and affective assumptions he and the Donatist preacher are working.

But let us return to our premise (and here I begin to get speculative). In *sermo* 46, Augustine is preaching in Africa to Africans. They know what the plains of Numidia are like; they know where the small Numidian town of Tigisi is. What sort of line is Augustine walking here between Christian orthodoxy and local pride? Were there those in his own congregation who rather liked the idea of God coming from Africa? Do those punchy short sentences and insistent demands for explication reveal an anxious strategy to quiet dissent? What about those repeated "ubi"s: "Novimus ubi sit natus Christus, ubi sit passus" – "We know where Christ was born, where he suffered": Augustine never actually specifies "ubi," and the aposiopesis has the effect of drawing his hearers into an esoteric community of knowledge from which the ignorant Donatists are excluded.

It is difficult to decode exactly what is going on with the most specific of the local references. "In Numidia … muscarium vix invenitur, in cupsonibus habitant." In fact, we do not even know whether people live in *cupsonibus* or *cupsionibus*: of the two manuscript witnesses, one spells it one way, one the other, and the word appears nowhere else in extant Latin literature. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* simply reprints this sentence under the lemma *cupso, cupsonis*, with a question mark against the suggested gender. All we can tell from the context is that the word must refer to dwelling places that do not require wood in their construction. The Maurists suggest that these are caves, but where are the cliffs that could form them? Given Augustine's emphasis here on the fertile plains of Numidia, I wonder whether they might not be dug-out houses of some sort. In any case, it must be a local term, but one which Augustine's congregation understood.

What about *muscarium*? This is treated as self-evident, and it is found in several other places, to mean a thistly plant sometimes used as a fly-whisk (hence, presumably, the name, from *musca*). "Fly-whisk" seems beside the point here.

[70] Note that Leroy entitles this sermon "De audivi," but he must have missed an expansion; it should be "D[omin]e audivi."

[71] *s. Leroy* 35, lines 1–2 and 3–4 respectively.

Puzzling over this word, I came across the following passage in Camus's *Algerian Chronicles*. He is reporting on the terrible famine in Kabylia in the late 1940s: "I was told that the indigents I saw had to make their 10 kilos [of wheat] last the entire month, supplementing their meager grain supply with roots and the stems of thistle, which the Kabyles, with bitter irony, call 'the artichoke of the ass.'"[72] Kabylia is exactly the area that Augustine is talking about in this sermon – the area of the ancient Tigisi (modern Ain-el-Bordj in Algeria, about 140 km south-west of Hippo), the area where Donatism had its origins. The Numidians too, it seems, had to make do with "the artichoke of the ass."

My wider point is that this is a sermon preached in a very specific part of Africa (though unfortunately we do not know exactly what part) to a congregation that understood very specific African references. And yet it is a sermon preached against the proudly African schism of the Donatists; it is, indeed, preached explicitly to exhort the congregation, which looks as if it included some Donatists, to unity. It is preached in the old style of telling one story and deriding the alternative, the style in which the Donatists and Catholics had been fighting each other for a century. The origin of Augustine's battle with Donatism, and of his insistence on the global nature of his own church, must have been – I have increasingly realized – in some part personal: the Donatists would not have recognized the validity of Augustine's own baptism, since their "true church" did not extend as far as Milan. This too lends energy to his disdain: "O testimonium!"

Augustine's Africanness is a complex thing. It is vividly on display, not in the *africitas* of his language, his notional pleonasms or superlatives, but in his local knowledge, and in the way in which, exegetically, he meets the Donatists on their own ground. He is trying to make his own Africanness into part of his bid for unity, in opposition to a schismatic sect that puts its own Africanness at the heart of its identity. Does that mean that the Africanness of Augustine is subordinated to Roman Christianity? or subsumed into it? or that it enriches and complicates it? How, for that matter, is the language of the bible freighted, the authoritative anti-rhetoric that he and the Donatists share? What is at stake in Augustine's insistence on the *codex*? At the beginning of this essay, I positioned Augustine as simultaneously an African and a Roman: how does his affiliation as a Latin-speaking Christian cut with or against those categories? The battle against Donatism puts the complexity of his situation on display: here, I have only begun to sketch out its nuances. *Africitas* may remain a useful term; but its connotations must move far beyond stylistic tics to a very particular and contested form of identity.

[72] Albert Camus, *Algerian Chronicles*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer, intr. Alice Kaplan (Cambridge MA/London, 2013), p. 43.